

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method of establishing communications comprising:
establishing a virtual connection between a source endpoint located behind a first connectivity barrier and a destination endpoint located behind a second connectivity barrier.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connectivity barriers comprises a firewall.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connectivity barriers comprises a consumer gateway.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein establishing a virtual connection includes:
establishing a first session between the source endpoint and a service; and
establishing a second session between the destination endpoint and the service.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4 including assigning one or more servers associated with the service to handle the sessions.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 in which the virtual connection is established based on a virtual host name associated with the source endpoint.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the virtual host name comprises part of a hierarchical naming system.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6 including providing a directory search application to allow a user to select the virtual host name.

AN 9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the source endpoint can roam ~~is capable of roaming~~ between networks.

10. (Original) The method of claim 4 including dynamically assigning at least one server associated with the service to handle the sessions.

11. (Currently amended) A method of establishing communications between source and destination endpoints comprising:

establishing a session between the source endpoint located behind a first connectivity barrier and a service; and

establishing a transport level communications connection between the service and the destination endpoint, the destination endpoint located behind a second connectivity barrier.

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the first and second barriers comprise firewalls ~~barrier comprises a firewall.~~

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the first and second barriers comprise consumer gateways ~~barrier comprises a consumer gateway.~~

14. (Original) The method of claim 11 including assigning a server associated with the service to handle the session.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11 in which the session is established based on a virtual host name associated with the source endpoint.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the virtual host name comprises part of hierarchical naming system.

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17. (Original) The method of claim 15 including providing a directory search application to allow a user to select the virtual host name.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 wherein the source endpoint can roam ~~is capable of roaming~~ between networks.

19. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the server is dynamically assigned.

20. (Original) A system comprising:

a service arranged to respond to a request from a first endpoint to establish communications with a second endpoint, wherein, if the second endpoint is located behind a connectivity barrier, a session initiated by the second endpoint is established with the service, and if the second endpoint is not located behind a connectivity barrier, a transport level communications connection is established with the second endpoint.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the connectivity barrier comprises a firewall.

22. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the connectivity barrier comprises a consumer gateway.

23. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the service is arranged to assign a server to handle the session between the first endpoint and the service based on a virtual host name associated with the first endpoint.

24. (Original) The system of claim 23 wherein the virtual host name comprises part of hierarchical naming system.

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25. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the service is arranged to assign a server to handle the session between the first endpoint and the service dynamically.

26. (Original) An article comprising a computer-readable medium including computer-executable instructions for causing a computer system, in response to a request from a first endpoint located behind a first connectivity barrier to establish connectivity to a second endpoint, to:

assign a server to handle a session between the first endpoint and a service; and
establish a session initiated by the second endpoint if the second endpoint is located behind a second connectivity barrier.

27. (Original) The article of claim 26 including instructions for causing the computer system to establish a transport level communications connection to the second endpoint if the second endpoint is not located behind a connectivity barrier.

28. (Original) The article of claim 26 including instructions for causing the computer system to instruct the first endpoint to establish a direct session with the second endpoint if the second endpoint is not located behind a connectivity barrier.

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29. (Original) The article of claim 26 including instructions for causing the computer system to establish the session between the first endpoint and the service based on a virtual host name associated with the first endpoint.

30. (Original) The article of claim 29 wherein the virtual host name comprises part of hierarchical naming system.
